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SERMON

Preach'd at the

ANNIVERSARY-MEETING

OF THE

SONS of the CLERGY

AT

St. *PAUL's* Cathedral,

On the 13th of *December*, 1722.

By *PAWLET St. JOHN*, D.D.
Rector of *Yelden* in *Bedfordshire*.

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Saint John
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TO

The Reverend Mr. *John Nicoll.*
The Reverend Mr. *William Vincent.*
The Reverend Mr. *Sᵐ. Manningham.*
The Reverend Mr. *Samuel Harris.*

And to the Worthy

Joseph Hall, Eſq;	Mr. *Ever. Goodman.*
Alexand. Strahan, Eſq;	Mr. *Nat. Partridge.*
Mr. *William Carter.*	Mr. *George Vincent.*
George Smith, Eſq;	Mr. *Hen. Holloway.*

STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the

SONS of the CLERGY.

Reverend and worthy Gentlemen,

THIS *very plain Diſcourſe, delivered lately in Your Preſence, and publiſhed now at Your Requeſt, waits*

waits on You to acknowledge the Honour of that Appointment.

If it appears, upon Peruſal, unequal to the Subject, you will impute it to the Greatneſs of it. For who, my good Brethren, is ſufficient for theſe things? As eaſily may we buy Bread to feed ſo great a multitude, as find Eloquence to exhort them, an Eloquence equal in any degree to the Dignity of ſuch an Audience, and the demands of this Solemnity.

If I diſpleaſe any one in this Diſcourſe, which I have avoided with great Diligence, forgive me this wrong; I know not that I have offended any. If I have provoked any to Love and to good Works, the only manner of provoking

voking You becoming a Preacher in all Places, and on this Occaſion neceſſary, great Comfort will redound to me from my having any way contributed to the Service of GOD's Church, and the Advantage of my Countrymen.

One Pleaſure, I am ſure I have, which You alone could give, and which no Man living ſhall take from me; ſo fair an Occaſion of commemorating Your two principal Benefactors, the Right Reverend Biſhop Turner, *and his Brother, now with GOD, to whom I have the Honour to ſtand perſonally obliged; and a Name, You will believe, the deareſt to me of all others, my late Royal Miſtreſs and Sovereign,* QUEEN ANNE, *of glorious and ever-bleſſed Memory.*

A Pleaſure next to this is the Opportunity You now indulge me of profeſſing my ſelf on this, and all other Occaſions,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt affectionate Brother,

And moſt oblig'd humble Servant,

PAWLET ST. JOHN.

PSAL. CXXII. 8, 9.

For my Brethren and Companions ſakes, I will now ſay, Peace be within Thee: Becauſe of the Houſe of the Lord our God, I will ſeek thy Good.

THE Pſalm, theſe Words are taken from, bears Inſcription in the Title of it, [a] *A Song of Degrees.* A Title, we may obſerve of great Eminence and Diſtinction, proper only to thoſe Services, where the

[a] שיר המעלות *A Pſalm of Aſcents: In the whole Number of Pſalms there are but fifteen ſo diſtinguiſhed.*

Occaſion and Performance were of a more than ordinary Solemnity, demanding, what the Words import, a more exalted Elevation both in the Voices, and in the Station of the Levites, who recited them.

And never ſurely was there a Performance more illuſtrious, never Deliverance more remarkable, than the Victory that occaſion'd it.

David at once the King, and the ſweet Singer of his *Iſrael*, did not think it was enough to adorn it with his Preſence, he compos'd himſelf the Words, he not improbably ſet the Muſick, it is more than probable he vouchſafed to aſſiſt in the Execution of it.

The Occaſion of this great Feſtivity, was the Defeat of a Rebellion no leſs dangerous, than unnatural, blown up, and maintain'd by the Perfidiouſneſs of his Son in the very Bowels of his Dominions.

And now that he is ſuffer'd with his aged Eyes once more to ſee, and with his Feet to ſtand again within the Gates of his *Jeruſalem*, in a grateful Reflection on the Multitude

Multitude of GOD's Mercies, he impatiently makes haſte to worſhip towards his holy Temple: There proſtrate at the Altars he had fled from before *Abſalom*, and tranſported with the Worſhip he had panted after in his Baniſhment, he pours out his Royal Soul in Interceſſions for his *Iſrael*, and calls on others to accompany him in their Prayers for its Peace, and in their Vows for its Proſperity. *Pſal.* v. 7.

I was glad, ſays the Royal Exile, *when they ſaid unto me, we will go into the Houſe of the Lord.* ℣. 1.

O pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem: They ſhall proſper that love thee. ℣. 6.

Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces. ℣. 7.

For my Brethren and Companions ſakes, (ſo the Monarch ſtyles his Subjects) *I will now ſay, Peace be within thee.* ℣. 8.

Deſcended from their Tribes, he is not aſhamed to call them Brethren; bred up with them from his Infancy, he ſalutes them his Companions; dear to him in their Civil Relation, much dearer ſtill in their Reli-

℣. 9. gious: *Yea, for the Houſe of the Lord our God, I will ſeek to do thee good.*

Toucht with Sentiments of like Gratitude for the extinguiſhing of a Rebellion more fatal in its Succeſs, not inferior in its Wickedneſs, and for a Reſtoration, in every View of it, as full of Wonder in the Event, and of Salvation in the Conſequences, the Royal Founder of this Charity reſolves to build an Houſe unto the Name of the Lord his God; [b] this holy, this beautiful Houſe, where our Fathers praiſed him, and in which we are now aſſembled, there to fix the wandring Ark of God, the Companion of his Dangers, and the Protector of his Majeſty. And whilſt he thus religiouſly employs himſelf in repairing of its Altars conſum'd by Fire, and profan'd by Sacrilege, he thinks it not beneath his Princely Care to provide alſo for its Attendants.

[b] *The Cathedral of St.* Paul's *begun, and finiſhed by Sir* Chriſtopher Wren, *now the worthy Vice-Preſident of the Corporation of this Charity.*

He

He ſaw the Clergy of the Church of *England* well nigh ſtarving for their Loyalty: He remember'd how they had born the Ark of the Lord before *David* in all his Troubles, had been afflicted in all the Miſeries wherewith his Father, the bleſſed Martyr, and himſelf had been afflicted: He perceiv'd the Portions of the *Levites* had for many Harveſts been withheld from them; their Patrimony, like his own, ſacrilegiouſly appropriated to the Price of Murder, and to the Service of Rebellion: He forgat not, but conſider'd, how in the Days of his Diſtreſs, the Houſe of his God had been ſcandalouſly forſaken, how the Prieſts, that did the Work, were fled every one unto his own Field, and therefore he makes haſte to gather them from their Diſperſion, and to ſet them in their Place again: And obſerving at the ſame time the Free-will Offerings of his People, how good Men, out of their little, caſt in Money for them into the Treaſury, and how many that were rich had caſt in much; he deem'd it right, and of Neceſſity, that he

1 *Kings* i. 26.

Neh. xiii. 10.

Mark xii. 41.

he, out of his Abundance, ſhould himſelf have ſomewhat alſo to offer; he was graciouſly therefore pleas'd, in Conſideration of this good Charity, not only to encourage it by his Example, but to eſtabliſh it by his Authority, and ſo appoint, under his own Great Seal, one Body Politick and Corporate, by the Name of *Governours of the Charity for the Relief of the poor Widows and Children of Clergymen in the Church of* England.

Ezra vii. 27. And bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be the Lord GOD of our Fathers, who did put ſuch a thing as this into the Heart of the King, and for all other the good Deeds, which that *Engliſh* Father of his *Engliſh* People did for the Houſe of his GOD, and for the Offices thereof.

Hither accordingly, one Day in every Year, under the Favour of this Authority, *Pſal.* cxxii. 4. do all our Tribes come up, hither more eſpecially does the Tribe of the Lord come up, to teſtify unto *Iſrael* the Royal Bounty of our Founder, and the Piety of our Benefactors, and devoutly at the ſame Time to

give

give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord, for the Riſe and the Progreſs of ſo religious an Eſtabliſhment.

And indeed when we look back on the Smallneſs of our Beginning, (for I need not tell you, my dear Brethren, it was but little that we had, before the falling of this gracious Rain, which refreſhed us when we were weary, and now, behold it is increaſed into a Multitude!) may we not juſtly ſay unto GOD, O Lord our GOD, all this Store that is prepared for us, cometh of thine Hand, and is all thine own? For what (alas!) are we? What our Fathers, and our Brethren? What our Friends, and our Benefactors, that they ſhould offer for us ſo willingly?

Pſal. lxviii. 9. *Gen.* xxx. 30 1 *Chro.* xxix. 16.

Except the GOD of our Fathers, the GOD of *Abraham*, and the Fear of *Iſaac*, had been with us, ſurely now they would have ſent us away empty. It was GOD, and He alone, that opened Rivers in the high Places, and Fountains in the midſt of Vallies, and Pools of Water in the Wilderneſs. The Charity which did on this Occaſion

Gen. xxxi. 42.

inſpire

inſpire both our Prince and People, the Grace of Charity, no leſs than all the Comforts which redound from it, was it ſelf a Gift that cometh of the Lord. And may it go on, as it has begun, for ever ſtill to flow, to make glad the City of our GOD, even the dwelling Places of the Prophets, and the Tabernacle of the moſt Higheſt.

Pſal. xlvi. 4.

But in the midſt of this Abundance, for which we beg leave moſt unfeignedly to rejoice with you, permit the Preachers on this Anniverſary to complain ſomewhat of its Barrenneſs. Although the Funds of this great Charity are ſo ſurprizingly increaſed, the Subject of it is impoveriſhed, the Springs of Eloquence are exhauſted, by the Labours of thoſe holy Men who have gone before us on the Argument. After ſo many Preachers on this Occaſion, wiſe and eloquent in their Inſtructions, we have nothing new that we can offer; after ſo many Trials of your Love, ſcarce any thing that is neceſſary.

Eccluſ. xliv. 4.

Eccluſ. xliv. 1.

Would we praiſe famous Men, the great Encouragers of this Charity, and our Anceſtors,

ceſtors who begat us? Alas! We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have from this Place more than once declared them to us. Do we begin again to commend our ſelves (for we have whereof to glory) in the Audience of this Aſſembly? What have we left to ſay, which has not already been deliver'd, concerning the Dignity of the Prieſthood, and the Sacredneſs of our Extraction? *Pſal.* xliv. 1. 2 *Cor.* 3. 1.

Or, finally, would we provoke you to Love and to good Works from the Example of our Benefactors, and the Riches of their Liberality? No ſooner do we remember the Forwardneſs of your Mind, how to your Power, we bear you Record, yea, and beyond your Power, ye have been willing of your ſelves, but, inſtead of exhorting you, on this Occaſion, to fill up the Meaſure, we more agreeably congratulate the Overflowings of your Charity, with which you have all along, unto this Day, thus miniſtred unto the Saints, and with which we truſt in God, ye even yet will miniſter. 2 *Cor.* viii. 3. *Heb.* vi. 10.

But, albeit you run before us in your Diſpoſition to this Charity, give me leave to entertain

tertain you with ſome Reflections on the Nature of it; and if you will indulge me but your Attention to the bare Recital of its Advantages, then, with the Pleaſure he deſerves, will every kind Contributer amongſt you look back on the paſt Labour of his Love, and be ſatisfy'd. In theſe I ſhall attend you through the following Diſcourſe, as an Help of your
2 *Cor.* i. 24. Joy, not as a Prompter of your Forwardneſs, which, in the Adminiſtration of this Service, not only ſupplies the Wants of the
2 *Cor.* ix. 12. Saints, but is abundant alſo by many Thankſgivings to GOD in your behalf.

In Compliance therefore with the Order of my Text, and the Deſign of this Solemnity, I ſhall take occaſion to recommend the Charity, we are now employ'd about, to the diſtreſſed Remains of the Clergy of the Church of *England*, from the following Conſiderations.

I. From the Obligations of our Nature, and the common Sentiments of Humanity. *For my Brethrens ſake*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *I will now ſay, Peace be within thee.*

II. From

II. From their Civil Relation to us in the Government, and our Regards to them as we are Countrymen. *For my Brethren and Companions ſakes, I will wiſh thee Proſperity.*

III. And more eſpecially, from the Dignity of their Employment, and the Sacredneſs of their Character, from whom theſe Families are deriv'd, beloved for their Fathers ſake, and entitled, upon their Account, to our greateſt Tenderneſs and Reſpect. *Yea, for the Houſe of the Lord our* GOD, *I will ſeek to do thee good.* *Rom.* xi. 28.

I. And, Firſt, I am to ſhew you how ſtrongly we are oblig'd to the Exerciſe of this Charity by the Engagements of our Nature, and the common Sentiments of Humanity: *For my Brethrens ſake, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee.*

Now as concerning Brotherly Love, my Brethren, as I would not have, ſo neither, when I conſider, can I ſuppoſe you ignorant. 1 *Theſ.* iv. 9.

Rom. xii. 15. To rejoice with them that do rejoice, to weep with them that weep, not only to feel within our ſelves, but to relieve in others, as we have Opportunity, the Pains, the Misfortunes, the Neceſſities, they complain of, concerning theſe things, I would preſume, ye have no need that I ſhould ſpeak unto you.

To do Good in theſe Inſtances, is no more in effect, than to love others for your own ſakes, and only another and a better Way of gratifying your ſelves. The Inſtances I have now been mentioning, are the firſt Elements of Charity: We are not form'd to them by Diſcipline, but diſpos'd by Nature; they are born in us, they grow up with us: So far ye your ſelves are taught of GOD, and inclin'd, by the very Faſhion of you, to love one another. *1 Theſ.* iv. 9.

But in this general Pretenſion to our Pity and Benevolence, which the Voice of Nature has proclaim'd ſo univerſal, that no Exception may reſtrain, no Unworthineſs can forfeit it, great Diſtinction we are to make, juſt Preference we muſt obſerve

ſerve to the Merits, and Condition of thoſe to whom we miniſter.

Good Will towards Men, of all Characters and Conditions, is a Debt we ſtand ſtrictly charg'd with by the firſt Principles of Humanity; but our Delight muſt dwell more particularly on the Saints that are in the Earth, and on ſuch as excell in Virtue. *Pſal.* xvi. 3. Great Compaſſion there is due to all, who are any ways afflicted with the Inconveniencies of Fortune, and the Preſſures of a low Eſtate; a greater ſtill to thoſe, whoſe Birth and Education had given them Promiſes of a better.

Great Charity ſure is due to their unhappy Circumſtances, who, through Age, or Diſappointment, not laviſh in their Expences, but unſucceſsful in their Induſtry, are become innocently the Objects of it.

What then ſhall we judge ſufficient for the Relief of thoſe poor Families, who have been honourably undone, not by the Vices, or ill Management, but by the Virtues of their Anceſtor, too great an Example himſelf of the Hoſpitality he recommended,

mended, or perhaps a Sacrifice to the Loyalty he exhorted others to adhere to.

To ſee the Son of ſuch a Father, ingenuous in his Deſcent, not unhopeful in his Improvements, who, as long as his Parent lived, counted himſelf an happy Man, thruſt out in one ſad Hour from the Plenty he was born in, and the Expectations he was bred to, into Hardſhips and Extremities he was untaught to fear, and unprepar'd to ſuffer!

To ſee the Widow of ſuch a Husband lamenting, with equal Grief, the Father ſhe cannot recal, and the Children ſhe cannot ſuccour, weeping and wailing, and refuſing to be comforted: To hear her ſay to her hungry little ones, Alas! my Children, in my Houſe is neither Bread nor Cloathing for you: To ſee her deſolate, a Captive, removing to and fro, begging her Bread with thoſe Hands with which ſhe had formerly diſpens'd it, and of thoſe very Perſons whom ſhe had more than once ſuſtained in her Proſperity! remembring all the while, as an Aggravation of her Miſeries, all

Mat. ii. 18.

Iſa. iii. 7.

Iſa: xlix. 21

all the pleasant things which she possessed in the Days of old, now lost and gone for ever, with the dead Partner of her Comforts, who had shar'd with her the Enjoyment of them! Have Pity on her, O my Friends, have Pity on this poor Destitute, for the Hand of GOD hath touched her. Be not asham'd to go along with me into the Cells of the Disconsolate; there survey a Scene of Woe, less frequent, GOD be thanked, since the Appointments of this Charity. Hear the Widow cry to one of you, Thy Servant, my Husband, is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord, and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any Sorrow like unto this Sorrow! To a Mother thus afflicted, Pity will not only be shewn of her Friend, but even extorted from an Enemy. A good *Samaritan* himself, a Dissenter from our Religion, if he has any Bowels of his own, should he come where this Widow was, when he saw, would have

Lam. i. 7.

Job xix. 21.

2 *Kings* iv. 1.

Lam. i. 12.

Compaſſion on her. God forbid, my Brethren, that a Prieſt, or a Levite ſhould paſs by on the other Side. Far be it from any one of us, who are of the Children of the Prophets, or our ſelves (a greater Honour!) as one of the Prophets, to delay to reply to her with the kind Impatience of the Man of God, What haſt thou in thy Houſe, and what ſhall I do for thee? But,

II. Another Engagement of our Charity to the Relicts and Poſterity of the Clergy of the Church of *England* is, their Relation to us in the Government, and our Regards to them, as we are Countrymen.

In the Times of Popery indeed, when the Clergy of theſe Kingdoms neither married, nor were given in Marriage, (and had they liv'd more ſpiritually under the Reſtraints of that Oeconomy, more like Angels of God, better qualify'd for that Condition, it would have tended more than, I fear, it did to the Honour of their Celibacy) their civil Relation to us in thoſe Circumſtances was more diſtant and remote,

Mark xii. 30

and

and less attach'd, than was found necessary, to the Interests of the Community. Single in their Persons, they gave no Hostages to its Tranquillity; devoted to a foreign Sovereign, and regardless of their natural, they brake the Bands of domestick Allegiance asunder, and wantonly cast away their Cords from them.

But no sooner were we redeemed from the Bondage of this Tyranny, and permitted to serve the Lord, not singly as before, but with our Sons, and with our Daughters, with our Families, and with our Little ones, but we grew insensibly a Civil Part of the Country we were born in, not to subsist, as we had done before, distinctly from the whole, but infus'd into every Part of it, and incorporated into its Interests. *Exod.* x. 10.

And what Advantages, my Brethren, has not the Virtue of such Progenitours, (Virtue the best Dowry we can entail upon our Children, or bequeath unto the Publick,) what Advantages, I say, of every Kind, has not the Virtue of such a Parentage been fruitful to produce?

Not to mention the lower Arts of Labour, by which we live, and of Trade, by which we flouriſh, we defend you at the Bar, we ſpeak for you in the Senate, your Fleets and your Armies have fought, and conquer'd under us; the Court it ſelf has not wanted, and the Country is yet full of us.

Pſal. ii. 10. Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Princes, be inſtructed, ye that are Judges of the Earth. Adopt generouſly for your own the tender Branches of ſuch a Root, the Increaſe of ſuch a Parentage. Let every one that is *Gen.* xxxi. 43. rich amongſt you ſay, Theſe Sons are my Sons, theſe Daughters are my Daughters, theſe Children are my Children. Call forth the Seeds of hereditary Virtue, which ſleep buried in theſe Veins, by ſeaſonable Refreſhments. The Love of your Country, the Good of the Common-wealth requires them at your Hands, and expects from you the Improvement of them. Raiſe up in their Fathers ſtead a Poſterity well qualify'd to ſupply them in their Churches, and to ſucceed them in their Principles; a Race

of Men juſtly zealous for the Intereſts of the Crown, and the Proſperity of your Government, well-affectioned, we may be ſure, to the Reformation from which they ſprang, born Enemies to *Rome*, and juſt Reproaches of its Celibacy.

So ſtrongly are we oblig'd for our Brethren and Companions, for our King, and Country's ſake, to wiſh them Proſperity: How much more for the ſake of Chriſt himſelf, *for the Houſe of the Lord our GOD, muſt we ſeek to do them Good?*

And this, you may be pleas'd to remember, was the

III. And laſt Conſideration I propos'd to ſpeak to.

The different Circumſtances of our Church, before and after the Reformation of theſe Kingdoms, remind me naturally of the Miracle ſo remarkably vouchſafed by GOD to *Gideon*. Before the Reformation, the Dew was on the Fleece only, and it was dry upon all the Earth beſides: The Zeal for GOD's Houſe had eat up and de- *Judges* vi. 37.

vour'd almoſt all others in the Land. The Houſe of God was all this while no better than a Houſe of Merchandize: Pardons, Indulgences, Releaſes from temporal Pain, and Titles to eternal Happineſs, brought in much Gain to the pious Craftſmen in thoſe Days of Superſtition.

John ii. 16.

The Miracle, ſince the Reformation, is now as unhappily revers'd: It is now dry only upon the Fleece, and upon all the Ground beſides there is Dew. But ſure, my Brethren, it was the Voice of Men, it was the Sacriledge of the Reformers, and not the Voice of God, that ſaid on this laſt Occaſion, Let it be dry on the Fleece only. More, doubtleſs, it would have conduc'd to the Honour of the Reformation, more ſerviceable would it have been to the Intereſts of Religion, if, inſtead of taking unto themſelves the Houſes of God in Poſſeſſion, they had apply'd them to their proper Uſes, had reſtor'd to the Parochial Clergy the Depredations unjuſtly made upon them by the Encroachments of the Monaſtical, and diverted only, inſtead of drying up, the Currents which had long

Pſal. lxxxiii. 12.

fed

fed the Lazineſs and the Luxury they too ſpeciouſly complain'd of. A double Weight of Inconvenience was by this means brought upon us. The Reformation at the ſame time that it enlarg'd our Expences, by indulging Leave to marry, contracted our Subſiſtence by the Alienation of our Revenues, and gave a melancholy Riſe to the Occaſion of this Solemnity, and to the Objects of the Charity we are at preſent recommending to you.

But, bleſſed be GOD, my Brethren, were it neceſſary to exhort, we want not Motives to ſolicit you. In behalf of theſe poor little ones, we need only recal to moſt of you the Memory of their dead Parents, thoſe who have labour'd amongſt you, and admoniſh'd you, and have ſpoken unto you the Word of GOD. For their Work's ſake, whilſt they watch'd over you, you did eſteem them very highly, and for their Maſter's, whom in that Miniſtration they had the Honour to repreſent. *1 Theſ.* v. 12. 13.

If there be therefore any Conſolation in the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which the Fa- *Phil.* ii. 1.